

**DRAFT**

**Agricultural Water Use Efficiency Assurances  
Stakeholder Focus Group**

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program will convene an informal focus group of stakeholders and agency representatives to receive guidance for further refinement of the agricultural water use efficiency program. The program must be acceptable to major stakeholder groups and CALFED agencies. A small focus group format was selected in order to avoid the posturing and hostility that sometimes characterizes public discussion on these issues. In acting on guidance received, CALFED will proceed with program refinement in an open public process.

**Goal:** Define an assurance mechanism that provides sufficient demonstration of agricultural water use efficiency to satisfy CALFED agencies and meet the standard of “aggressive implementation of water use efficiency measures” and demonstration of a “high level of water use efficiency” called for in the *Draft Preferred Program Alternative 30-Year Policy Framework* dated August 14, 1998.

**Objectives** Clarify areas of agreement and disagreement among stakeholder groups, and increase understanding of the reasons for disagreement.

Obtain advice on program direction, which can then be discussed in subsequent public forums such as the Bay-Delta Advisory Council.

Explore stakeholder ideas and desires for an expert panel on agricultural water use efficiency. If the focus group believes that an expert panel would help CALFED achieve consensus on water use efficiency, define the expertise necessary on the panel, develop a list of potential panelists, and draft questions that could be posed to the panel.

**Membership** The focus group will be composed of CALFED agency representatives and representatives of agricultural and environmental interests. Criteria for selection of focus group participants include the following:

CALFED Agencies: Essential participants will be those agencies with strong water use efficiency technical assistance programs (DWR and USBR), and agencies with strong ties to stakeholder communities with divergent views on assurance of agricultural water use efficiency (USEPA and CDFA).

Stakeholder Representatives: The focus group must be kept small to avoid posturing that often occurs in larger forums. Both the agricultural water user and environmental stakeholder communities must be represented, with an equal number of participants from each stakeholder group. Members of the focus group should be familiar with the issues and with the CALFED Program, and should be flexible and creative in their approach to issue resolution. Representatives of agricultural water users should also represent the geographic diversity of agricultural water use due to the different conditions that exist across the state.

## **Work Tasks**

Completion of this activity will include the following tasks:

### **Task 1. Initial Preparation**

CALFED staff and consultant will develop detail regarding the work activity, including development of a set of standardized questions that can be asked of each focus group member.

### **Task 2. Focus Group Planning with CALFED Agencies**

CALFED staff and the consultant will meet with potential CALFED agency members of focus group and make sure there is agency input and concurrence on the work activity.

### **Task 3. Conduct Agency and Stakeholder Interviews**

The consultant will develop list of interview questions in cooperation with CALFED staff. Consultant will arrange and conduct interviews with each agency and stakeholder member of the focus group to help clarify issues, areas of agreement and disagreement. Consultant will prepare a document framing issues and describing details of approach as determined by interviews.

### **Task 4. Conduct Facilitated Meetings of Informal Focus Group**

Consultant will prepare an information/briefing packet for focus group members describing ground rules for meetings and framing the issues that may be discussed. One to several facilitated meetings of the focus group will be conducted. The number of meetings will be determined by the level of success shown in meeting the goal and the level of constructive dialogue that occurs. If the meetings are constructive and productive, about four focus group meetings may be held.

**Task 5. Summarize and Report on Focus Group Efforts.**

When the focus group has concluded its work, the consultant will prepare a brief summary report describing the focus group's recommendations. If requested by CALFED, the consultant will provide briefings to CALFED Management Team, CALFED Policy Group, and BDAC.

**Schedule**

Funding became available to proceed with this work on August 31, 1998. By the Policy Group meeting on September 14 and 15, Task 3 will be under way. The first focus group meeting will be held in October. It is the intention of CALFED to incorporate information from focus group into the Revised Draft EIS/EIR. However, the completion of the focus group activities will depend on the success of the first focus group meeting and the ability of focus group members to schedule future meetings in a timely manner.